

Glossary of Terms

The following terms appear throughout the Forsythe II Project scoping document and are provided for clarification.

Basal Area: Common term used to describe the average amount of an area (usually an acre) occupied by tree stems. The total cross-sectional area of a stand of trees measured at breast height and expressed in square feet per acre.

Biological Diversity (biodiversity): The full variety of life in an area including the ecosystems, plant, and animal communities; species and genes; and the processes through which individual organisms interact with one another and with their environments.

Broadcast Burn (a type of prescribed fire): Controlled application of fire to fuels in either their natural or modified state (such as slash), under specified environmental conditions that allows the fire to be confined to a predetermined area, and produce the fire behavior and fire characteristics required to attain planned fire treatment and resource management objectives.

Canopy: The extent of the outer layer of leaves of an individual tree or group of trees.

Canopy Fuels: The live and dead foliage, live and dead branches, and lichen of trees and tall shrubs that lie above the surface fuels.

Chipping: The process of reducing larger woody material into smaller pieces using a wood chipper machine.

Clearcut: A forestry or logging practice in which most or all trees in an area are uniformly cut down.

Closed canopy forest: A condition in which the crowns or canopies of individual trees overlap to form a virtually continuous canopy layer.

Control Feature: A term for used to describe all constructed or natural barriers and treated fire edges used to control a fire.

Decommission (Roads): The reclamation and/or restoration of the land occupied by a road prism.

Defensible Space: Defensible space is an area between houses/structures, which is either man-made or natural where the vegetation is modified and maintained to slow the rate and intensity of an oncoming wildfire. It also provides an opportunity for firefighters to work and defend the house and helps protect the surrounding forest from igniting in the event of a structure fire.

Diameter at Breast Height (DBH): The diameter of a standing tree at a point 4.5 feet from ground level.

Fire Frequency: A term referring to the recurrence of fire in a given area over time.

Fire Regime: Description of the patterns of fire occurrences, frequency, size, severity, and sometimes vegetation and fire effects as well, in a given area or ecosystem. A fire regime is a

generalization based on fire histories at individual sites. Fire regimes can often be described as cycles because some parts of the histories usually get repeated, and the repetitions can be counted and measured, such as fire return interval.

Fire Return Interval: The number of years between two successive fire events for a given area; also referred to as fire-free interval or fire-return interval.

Fire Severity: Degree to which a site has been altered or disrupted by fire; loosely, a product of fire intensity and residence time.

Fuels: The organic materials that will support the start and spread of a fire: duff, litter, grass, weeds, forbs, brush, trees, and dead woody materials.

Ladder Fuel: Fuels which provide vertical continuity between strata, thereby allowing fire to carry from surface fuels into the crowns of trees or shrubs with relative ease. They help initiate and assure the continuation of crowning.

Mastication: The process of reducing larger woody slash and surface fuels into smaller material. Material is generally masticated in place with equipment.

Old Growth: Typically distinguished from younger growth by several of the following attributes: large trees for species and site; variation of tree sizes and spacing; standing and down dead trees; decadence in the form of broken or deformed tops, or bole and root decay; multiple canopy layers; and gaps in the tree canopy and understory patchiness. Minimum prerequisites for a site to be classified as old growth are large live trees some of which are old and declining, either snags or fallen trees, and greater than 20 percent canopy closure.

Open canopy forest: A condition in which individual tree crowns or canopies do not overlap to form a continuous canopy layer but are more widely spaced, leaving open sunlit areas within the forested area.

Patchcut: Clearcutting of small areas (less than 5 acres).

Pile Burn (a type of prescribed fire): A slash treatment where piles created by tree cutting operations are burned. Piles can be created by machine or by hand.

Slash: Fuels resulting from treatment activities, such as thinning; and natural events, such as wind or insect and disease. Slash can consist of branches, tree tops, logs, and broken or uprooted trees.

Surface Fuels: Fuel on the surface of the ground, consisting of: needles, leaves, grass, forbs, dead and down branches and boles, stumps, shrubs, and short trees.

Thinning: A treatment where individual trees are cut to reduce stand density of trees primarily to improve growth, enhance forest health, or recover potential mortality.